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ABSTRACT

Every reader possesses five distinct vocabularies--listening, speaking, reading, writing, and potential--which grow at different rates, depend on the background and motivation of a particular reader, and are positively related to overall intelligence and reading comprehension. If students are to gain complete understanding of reading material in content areas, they must be exposed to a well-developed program of vocabulary enlargement in every subject area. Content area teachers must develop a careful program for building these skills based on at least eight important principles, including introducing the words chosen for study as part of a sentence and never in isolation, providing meaningful exercises and lessons for practice with newly learned words, and informing students that a single word may represent many different parts of speech and have different meanings depending on sentence structure. Activities based on these principles include having students underline words in a text passage, write the definition they think is appropriate, and match definitions with respective words. Finally, evaluating students' vocabulary skill development can be done with commercial reading tests or a cloze procedure test. (HTH)

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BUILDING VOCABULARY IN EVERY CONTENT AREA

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The contribution of the several types of vocabularies cannot be accurately estimated with respect to the enlargement of word attack and comprehension skills in the content areas. Building vocabulary in every content area serves to help each student improve his or her understanding of the thousands of different words which are encountered in the content areas during a given semester or school year. Since reading comprehension is based on a thorough and complete understanding of what words mean, students should receive a regular and well devised program of instruction in vocabulary from each and every teacher in a given school system.

In order to help each member of the audience with the important task of building vocabulary skills, I am going to discuss the different types of vocabulary; the place of vocabulary in the reading process, some of the principles for teaching vocabulary, and finally, I wish to discuss this morning some of the teaching strategies that you might use for helping students build a vocabulary in the various content areas.

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DIFFERENT TYPES OF READING VOCABULARY

Every reader possesses five rather distinct vocabularies. We do know that these vocabularies grow at different rates and depend on the background and motivation of a particular reader. Also, we know that vocabulary is positively related to overall general intelligence and reading comprehension at each of the various levels. Literal, interpretive, critical and creative comprehension skills are directly correlated to the reader's ability to understand words.

Listening Vocabulary

The first type of vocabulary that I would like to discuss is that of listening vocabulary. Listening vocabulary is, by and large, constructed through the association of words which the reader hears spoken by parents and friends. Accordingly, a young boy or girl who lives in an environment where there is sufficient oral stimulation will probably develop a very proficient level of listening vocabulary. Conversely, a child who has been in a very deprived environment where little conversation takes place will have a very limited level of proficiency in this important area.

The enlargement of the speaking, reading and writing vocabularies will hinge on the level of the listening vocabulary which has been established by the reader. Certainly adults should continue to build their listening vocabularies and attend closely to the many words spoken on television and other media devices. In the content area the oral vocabulary

of the teacher is most significant with respect to the building of listening vocabulary on the part of the students. It should behoove each content teacher to use as many new words in appropriate contexts as possible to help each student in this important area.

Speaking Vocabulary

The speaking vocabulary of a student is based, of course, on his or her listening vocabulary. The level of development would be dependent upon the background of experience that he or she has had. Some authorities say that a high school student, for example, may develop as many as six thousand to seven thousand words in his or her speaking vocabulary. In any content area the teacher should give many opportunities for a student to demonstrate the speaking vocabulary that has been generated.

Reading Vocabulary

Reading vocabulary is based on the speaking and listening vocabulary and probably will be much larger than is the case with the speaking vocabulary. One can read words and gain some meaning from them in context, but will not be able to use those same words in normal day-to-day speaking. The degree of ability of a student in the area of speaking vocabulary can be assessed through the use of tapes when a student is giving a report in class or in similar circumstances.

Writing Vocabulary

Writing vocabulary is based on the student's competencies in the three previous types of vocabulary. After a student has been introduced to a number of new vocabulary words and gained an understanding of the meaning of the words, he or she should be given an opportunity to complete creative writing assignments which will demonstrate the use of these newly learned words. The content teacher could list a number of vocabulary words and ask the student to write them in different kinds of essays which would be correlated with the subjects being discussed in a particular content area.

Potential Vocabulary

The potential or understanding vocabulary relates to all of the words which any person could understand when many different situations are present. These are words which the student might hear in programs and on television presentations. They may understand what the words would mean but they could not accordingly use them later in either speaking or writing situations. There is no accurate measure of the total number of words in any one student's potential vocabulary; however, some authorities indicate that a twelfth grade student may know as many as 85,000 to 100,000 words.

THE PLACE OF VOCABULARY IN THE READING PROCESS

As has already been suggested this morning, there is a substantial relationship between the level of vocabulary and

the efficiency a student might have in literal, interpretive, critical and creative comprehension. Since comprehension is, indeed, the end product of the reading process, all students must have an adequate understanding of word meanings which might be used in any particular content area. We also know that there is a rather significant relationship between vocabulary development and the items asked on some individual intelligence tests.

If a student is to gain a complete understanding of the material in a content area, he or she must be exposed to a well developed program of vocabulary enlargement in each and every subject area. This concept would demand that the teacher present new and unfamiliar words on a regular basis in each and every content lesson.

PRINCIPLES FOR TEACHING VOCABULARY

If content teachers are to build the vocabulary levels of all their students on a regular planned basis, they must develop a rather precise and careful program or strategies for building these skills. There are at least eight important principles to remember in planning and executing lessons to enlarge vocabulary. These are not presented in any particular order of importance, but each is equally important to all of the others.

1. Evaluate each student's general vocabulary skills through the use of a commercial or informal reading test. At the high school level you might

want to use the Nelson-Denny Reading Test. If a teacher-made or informal test is desired, you might want to include a maze or a cloze test. A cloze test involves a 260 word selection in which every fifth word (for a total of 50 words) is left out and students are asked to write the word which would be most appropriate in each blank. If they are able to fill at least 38 of the 50 blanks with words which are the same or nearly the same as the original passage, their vocabulary and overall comprehension might be suitable for that particular book and subject area. The maze test is very similar to the cloze test. With this test supply three choices for each of the blanks. One of the choices would be the word which would logically go in the blank while the other two are inappropriate.

2. After having decided the words which should be taught in a particular lesson, introduce the words as a part of a sentence and never as isolated words. There are a sizable number of words in the English language which must be used in context, such as the words "read" and "refuse". One has to have semantic clues surrounding these words in order to pronounce them.
3. After these words have been taught, one should provide meaningful exercises and lessons which

will give the students practice in using the newly learned words. This could be through the use of short essays or short talks which the students are asked to write or to give in a class.

4. Students must be motivated to learn an ever increasing number of new words. They may be motivated by having them keep a vocabulary notebook of new words that they have learned. Some students may like to illustrate the words, while others might like to demonstrate their knowledge of new words by building bulletin boards or other types of media activities. One group of students constructed a bulletin board of "oppowords" and each student in the class was asked to add "oppowords" to the ones already listed. Examples of of oppowords would be "dedarkful" for the word "delightful" or "overstand" for "understand."
5. Encourage students to read many different kinds of materials other than just the textbook. Invite them to look for new and interesting words related to the content area that they might find in magazines and newspapers. Ask them if they would like to share the words with other members of the class. Perhaps one or more of the students might like to contribute a column to the school newspaper in which they present some of the new and exciting words which they have learned or found.

6. Be sure and inform your students that a single word may represent many different parts of speech and have many different meanings depending upon the placement of the word in the sentence. You can accomplish this objective by having the students complete crossword puzzles which are of a commercial nature or have been made by students through the use of multiple choice sentences or sentence completion exercises. Also, creative dictionary exercises which call for the student to find the particular meaning of a word that is in a given sentence might be interesting.
7. It is important to point out to students the significance of Latin derivatives and what these derivatives mean. For example, they should know that when they encounter a word with the prefix "tri" that this always means three. "Itis" means something is inflamed or infected. For example, the word "bronchitis" means that the bronchial tubes are infected or diseased.
8. One of the most significant things that content teachers can do is to expose the students to different objects and non-objects which represent the meaning of various vocabulary words. Field trips in science, which would result in the student actually seeing a particular kind of rock will be more meaningful to the student than if the student

saw a picture of the rock in the textbook. Objects of a concrete nature are quite helpful in developing a sense of meaning for a particular word.

TEACHING STRATEGIES FOR CORRECTING VOCABULARY DEFICIENCIES

I have just discussed with you some of the principles which you should think about as you are teaching vocabulary in the content areas. Now I would like to give you some concrete examples of strategies which you might use for a teaching vocabulary in many different situations.

1. The first strategy which I would like to discuss is that of merely duplicating a short selection from some materials which you are using in the content area. Underline various words in the selection. Ask the students to write the words on a piece of paper and record the definition that they think is appropriate for that particular word. Discuss the words during class time to see whether or not the students have developed the correct meaning for the word.
2. Another exercise involves the use of bingo-type cards. In each of the squares on the Bingo card is printed a word which has been taught recently in a content lesson. Say to the students that you're going to read several different definitions for the words. When they hear a particular

definition, they find the word which correlates with that definition and place a small object on that particular word much as one does in a Bingo game

3. Another strategy which can be used with students is that of writing different kinds of new vocabulary words on chalkboard. Give each student a list of scrambled meanings which have been recorded on a piece of paper. The student is to indicate the number of the meaning which correlates with the word which has been written on the board.
4. Another strategy you might use is the use of the maze exercise which I alluded to at an earlier point in this address. In this type of exercise, copy two or three paragraphs from some content material, leaving out every fifth word. Take the list of words which you omitted from the original passage, and put them in a scrambled list. The student is to find the correct word from the scrambled list which goes on the blank space.
5. Lastly, I would like to suggest that you might want to employ an exercise which would call for the student to categorize common words. For example, you might hand them a list of twenty words. Ask them to look at each word carefully and write it in one of four categories. One category would entail <u>transportation</u>, another <u>Presidents</u>, another

rivers, and the last might be mountains. They are to take the words in the scrambled list and place them in the appropriate category. For example, if the word "Mississippi" is in the list, they obviously would put it in the column under rivers.

EVALUATION OF VOCABULARY SKILL DEVELOPMENT

I would like to conclude this paper by discussing a few of the more common ways of evaluating skill development. You understand, of course, that vocabulary evaluation must entail the use of both commercial and informal reading devices. Additionally, you would want to observe the student carefully and listen to verbal responses given in everyday lessons.

Under the heading of "Commercial Tests" involving vocabulary, you might want to use one of the more common reading achievement tests, such as the Iowa Test of Basic Skills or the Nelson-Denney Reading Test or the Diagnostic Reading Test. These tests have national norms. You can compare the vocabulary proficiency of your students with those in other schools in other parts of the country. You might want to use a cloze or a maze test as an informal device for evaluating vocabulary. I have already described these two devices in an earlier part of this address.

Your own careful evaluation and the student's oral conversation will provide an important clue as to whether or not a student has grasped the meaning of new vocabulary words which have been introduced. The careful evaluation of each student's

level of vocabulary will provide the information needed for building the day-to-day lessons in vocabulary and comprehension. Closing, it is important for you to remember that vocabulary enlargement is one of the most important keys to success in reading content area material. You are the important link in helping every student develop maximum vocabulary levels.